



XXVI. *Observations on a Gold Ring of Hindu Fabrication found at Montrose in Scotland.* By *LIEUT.-COLONEL JAMES TOD, M.R.A.S., &c. &c.*

Read May 15, 1830.

THE ring, of which a fac-simile is annexed, was sent to me by a valued associate of our Society with the following letter :

“ Upper Lodge, Bushey Park, 20th March 1829.

“ My dear Sir : You will at once appreciate the following curious circumstances connected with the ring that accompanies this letter.

“ It was dug up on the Fort Hill near Montrose, some years since, on the site of an engagement occasioned by the landing of the English during Mary’s minority and her absence in France.

“ The late Miss Erskine, of Dun, purchased it, as it was supposed to bear the supporters of the arms (two griffins) of that family.

“ It has since been duly considered as a family relic until shewn to me by the Countess of Cassilis, though her ladyship had ever, herself, been sceptical on its supposed relation to her ancestors.

“ It required but a slight knowledge of Hindu mythology at once to

“ claim for it an eastern origin ; and I have begged her Ladyship’s permis-
 “ sion to send it to you, hoping you will offer to the Royal Asiatic Society
 “ of Great Britain and Ireland such observations on the discovery of so
 “ extraordinary a relic in so unlooked-for a quarter, as your extensive infor-
 “ mation respecting the history and antiquities of India may suggest.

“ My dear Sir,

“ Most truly your’s,

(Signed) “ G. FITZCLARENCE.”

“ To Lieut.-Colonel Tod, Birdhurst, Croydon.”

As Colonel Fitzclarence justly remarks, “ it requires but a slight know-
 “ ledge of Hindu mythology at once to claim for this ring an eastern origin,”
 though it will not be so easy to assign a satisfactory solution of its discovery
 “ in so unlooked-for a quarter.” Were it stamped with less unquestionable
 characteristics of Hindu art, we might argue on the possibility of its being
 a Celtic relic ; but participating somewhat in the scepticism of the noble
 proprietor of the ring, we shall “ *avisez la fin*,”* before we commit our-
 selves to the suggestion that it may have appertained to some Celtic adorer
 of Isis, or one of those “ giant Getes ” from Scania, who in ancient times
 found sepulture in their descents on the Scots. But let us describe what it
 actually is, ere we speculate further on its origin.

This mystic amulet has at once an astrological and mythological import.
 It represents the symbol of the sun-god BAL-NAT’H, around which is
 wreathed a serpent *guardant*, with two bulls as supporters : or the powers of
 creative nature in unison, typified in the miniature Lingam and Yoni—in
 short, a graven image of that primeval worship which prevailed among the
 nations of antiquity. This is “ the pillar and the calf worshipped on the
 15th of the month ” (the sacred *Amarvus* of the Hindus) by the Israelites,
 when they adopted the rites of the Syro-Phœnician adorers of BAL, the sun.
 This, the pillar of Belenus (whose rites were introduced by those early
 navigators into Gaul and Britain), to whom were raised those rude unchiselled
 columns scattered over Europe wherever the Celtic name was known.

In Hindu mythology the bull, Nanda, is at once the guardian of one of the
 two † gates of the heaven of ISWARA ‡ or BAL-SIVA, and his steed. The

* The motto of the Cassilis family.

† The equinoctial signs.

‡ Nanda, the bull of the Hindu Iswara, is the Mnevis or Apis of Osiris. The mysteries of
 the Lingam and Phallus are evidently the same.

astronomic allusion thus blended with mythology is evident, *i. e.* the entrance of the sun into the sign Taurus, the equinoctial festival of remote antiquity, and regarded as a jubilee by the Indo-Scythic nations hemming the shores of the Mediterranean to the Indian ocean.*

This relic, therefore, must have belonged to some pious devotee, who, desirous never to lose sight of the object of his adoration, wore it as a talisman on the thumb. The uncommon appendage on the shoulders which induced the noble possessor to imagine the bulls to be the winged *wiverns* supporting the arms of Mar, is the *hump* which characterizes the kine within the Indus. I possess medals of Indo-Scythic princes with both Greek and Parthic legends, having the same humped bull on the obverse side, which not only demonstrates the extent of the Indo-Scythic empire,† but affords evidence of a combination of the Mithraic worship of the Transoxianic nations with that of the Tauriform representative of the Hindu solar divinity.

While, however, I suggest these reasons for the Hindu origin of the ring, I would by no means preclude others from entertaining the idea that it may be Celtic, Phœnician, or Getic. The objections which occur at a first glance of the relic may be diminished by recalling the uniformity of worship which distinguished the races who, from some central region of early civilization, perhaps *Sacadwîpa*, *Sacatai*, or *Scythia* (of which Balk might have been the metropolis), whence India and Egypt, Syria and Greece, were enlightened, still preserved, wherever they migrated, the remembrance of an ancient festival; on which, whether of Surya on the Ganges; of Thor (or Sor) in Scandinavia; of Beli, or Belenus, amongst the Celts; or of Mithras amongst the Persians, the bull was the victim to the solar divinity.

Some may suppose this relic to have been carried west in some early migration; for none will dispute the ability of the children of Tubal Cain to fabricate such ornaments when Europe was in barbarism. Even the beaded edges and other characteristics of the Hindu *Cellini* might be attributed to the unalterable laws which govern the oriental crafts even in the model of a ring.

The symbols of the creative power, which are wreathed around the por-

* See description of the festival of *Gouri*, or Isis, on the vernal equinox in Rajpootana.—Annals of Rajast'han, vol. i. p. 573.

† See Trans. R. A. S., vol. i. p. 313. Also "Observations on that paper of the author, on Bactrian and Parthic Medals, by the celebrated M. de Schlegel, *Journal Asiatique*.

tal of the minor temple of Isis at Pompeï, are precisely those before the reader; and in the *terra cotta Penates* of the same divinity, *four thousand* of which were excavated from the precincts of her fane at Pæstum, the goddess holds in her right hand this same symbol, emblematic perhaps of that grand catastrophe, the flood, alluded to in the Egyptian fable of Isis and Osiris; and the preservation of the species from Typhon, the destructive power, typified in the serpent. When I detected these symbols at Cortona, at Pompeï, and Pæstum, those ancient cities founded by the first colonists of Italy, I was gratified in finding the mythological chain which connected the Isis of the Ganges and the Nile extended to the Tiber and the Arno. It was by the Celto-Etruscan tribes that the worship of Isis was introduced, long before the "eternal city" existed: the Romans had no occasion to import her rites from Egypt. Her name is the same, and bears the same signification in Celtic as in Greek; and Suetonius, the historian, incidentally lets us know that the imperial epithet *Cesar*, deprived of its initial letter, means *dominus* in the old Tuscan. Thus the *Esar* and *Es-és* of the Etrusci are the *Eswara* and *Esa* of the Hindus. But there are many proofs besides this isolated example of the Indo-Scythic origin of the ancient Etrusci: they had the division of castes,* *viz.*

1st. The *Larthes*, or *Tyrani*, or lords.

2d. The *Tusci*, or priesthood.

3d. The *Rasenæ*,† or warriors.

4th. The *Mass*, or "*caste populaire*."

The Etruscans had also this remarkable feature: their sacred books, like those of the Hindus, laid down architectural rules for their cities and edifices;‡ those vast monuments so analogous to the most antique fortresses of India, which evince both races to have been far advanced in the mechanical arts. The sculpture in the Tuscan cities has a decidedly Oriental character.§ Some of the most celebrated names both of ancient and modern days maintain the Indo-Scythic origin of this branch of the Pelasgii, and locate their cradle between the Euxine and Caspian;|| but I presume to surmise that this was but an intermediate place of halt from a more eastern abode, that of Transoxiana, the land of the *Túrshkâ* invaders of India,

* Malte-Brun, *Précis de Géographie*, tom. vi. p. 106.

† The third caste, or warriors, is good Sanscrit: *Séna*, the army—of the state, *Raj*.

‡ Micali, "*l'Italie avant la domination des Romains*," Ed. R. Rochette, tom. i, ch. x.

§ See Plates to Micali.

|| Micali, tom. i, p. 85, Volney.

which clearly approximates to *Turscum*, the ancient *Toscan*. Can this possibly be a colony of the Indo-Scythic Turshka, or Takshac from Sakatai, to which allusion is often made in the earliest traditions of India, and always figuratively as the *serpent race*, a branch of which, the *Nagvansi* chieftains of Ramgur'h Sirgooja, have the *lunettes* of their serpent * ancestor engraved on their signets in proof of their lineage? The Ophite worship, conjoined with that of Isis, may thus have been introduced into India and Italy by colonies of the same race, and certainly the characters of the *Osci* or *Opici* (the serpent race of Italy), adopted by the Etruscans, have a great analogy to the rock-inscriptions of the Scythic *Sauras*, or sun-worshippers of Saurashtra.

In the ring before us we see this reptile guarding the emblems of fruition ; and in the palace of Portici (where are deposited the discoveries of Pompeii) there is the mosaic pavement of the temple, which represents the same symbol of Isis guarded by two serpent supporters. The serpent is also placed over the portal of a garden at Pompeii, significant of the same mystery. It is curious that the *Osci* or *Opici*, who not only held all Campania sacred to Isis, and its adjoining provinces, but spread their branches throughout Italy, has been by some derived from "*Serpentes* ;" and though it is not said the *Tursci* or Etrusci is one of its branches, yet they were evidently of *one* stock. The adoption of the serpent-guardian of the emblem of Isis at Pompeii would thus receive explanation, and strengthen the existence of a common origin of the Indo-Scythic Turshka of Central Asia and India, and the Tursci and Osci of Italy; but here we are in darkness ; let us leave Italy for Gaul.

The Celtic tribes of Gaul and Britain were as ardent votaries of Isis as those of Italy ; nor were the Getic or Gothic tribes of the north less

* *Takshac*, *Serpa*, *Nāga*, are all used synonymously for serpent. It is a singular fact, that in every country the serpent is the medium of communicating knowledge. These Takshacs, Nagas, or serpents, introduced letters into India. Such the interpretation of the *eagle*, symbolic of the Vishnuvi's seizing the celebrated work Pingál from the snake, as of Crishna's own exploit in recovering the *secrets* or *Vedas* from the deep, where they were conveyed by the serpent. These *wise serpents* are the Takshacs of Higher Asia. All these races were named after animals and reptiles, as the *Aswas* or horses, a celebrated Indo-Scythic race: the *Sussoos*, or hares; the *Cuchwas*, or tortoises. Thus the Nagas assumed this reptile as the symbol of superior intelligence (*Bood'h*).—See Art. *Takshc*, vol. i. p. 103, *Annals of Rajast'han*. Since writing which, Mr. Fleming communicated to me the fact of the Nagavansi chiefs of the mountainous regions of Sirgooja adopting those *spectacles* of the hooded *cobra-di-capella* as their signet.

enthusiastic in their devotions to this, the *Bona Dea* of all nations, who conjoined the worship of the evil principle, typified in the serpent, with that of the “*Nourisher*.” The worship of Isis obtained throughout Celtic Gaul, as in Italy, ere Rome was founded: she is an indigenous divinity, not of exotic adoption; and the capital of the Franks, the abode of the Celtic *Parisii*,* takes its name from the goddess,† whose statue was preserved in the Abbey of St. Germain ‡ to the year 1514; when the piety of the Archbishop of Meaux interposed to the destruction of this object of ancient superstition. Isis had not, even at this advanced period of Christianity, lost all her influence, and we might have compared her effigy with Isani, but for the piety of the Bishop’s secretary: “*Frere Jehan, sur-*”
 “*nommé le sage, assurant qu’il avoit trouvé une femme a genoux devant cette*”
 “*idole, tenant une touffé de chandelles allumées, et deplorant quelque perte*”
 “*qui lui était advenue, et interrogée qu’elle faisait la, repondit que, des écoliers*”
 “*au Pré aux clerks lui avaient donné ce conceil et dict: ‘Allez à l’idole St.*”
 “*‘Germain et vous trouverez ce qu’avez perdu.’ En la place de la site,*”
 “*le dit sieur Bricomet y fist sceller une grande croix que l’on y void encore.*”§
 The personal description of the goddess from two ancient authorities, is the perfect counterpart of the consort of the Hindu sun-god, BAL NATH, or Siva: “*Elle était comme d’une grande femme hâve, maigre et déchevelée;*”
 “*noire et nue:”*|| the exact representation of the consort goddess of Iswara, on the exterior of his temples, where their symbols, the Lingam and Yoni, as represented on the ring, are worshipped in the sanctum. Precisely the *Kali Devi*, or black goddess, whose common appellation of *Súkâ Mátâ*, the dry mother, may either express that she has given all her nourishment to her children, or that she is the parent at once of life and death.

It is an erroneous, though generally-received opinion, that the Celtic races had no sculptured deities or temples previous to their becoming tribu-

* Histoire de l’Isle de France.

† La ville de Paris, autrefois dédiée à Isis, et située près de la ville d’*Isia* (Melun) eut de tems immémorial un navire pour symbole et pour armes. Son nom, en langue Celtique et Grecque (qui sont les deux sœurs) est dérivé de *Para-Isidos*, près d’*Isis*.—*Dissertation sur Belenus*, p. 25, prefixed to “*Recherches Historiques sur Falaise*.”

‡ *Des-Prés*, formerly the temple of Isis.

§ *Des Parisii*, et du culte de Gaulois, p. 73, where the author has extracted from the old historians all that regards the Isis of the *Parisii*, whose orthography is preserved in the quotation. This author gives abundant evidence, as the *Fauxbourg d’Issi*, &c.

|| *Des Parisii*, &c., p. 71, 72.

tarries of Rome ; but good authority proves the reverse.* That most interesting town, Falaise, which exhibits so many vestiges of Celtic superstition, is, like Paris and the Parisii, derived from the symbolic worship of the same divinity—*Phaloi-Isis*, contracted Falaisia, Falesia, Falaise. On the site of her temple, “*dont les deux gables subsistent encore,*” is erected the church of the Sainte Trinité, of which these gables form the “*croisillon,*” or transept. They are described to have been pierced for celestial observation : “*Dans le gable qui regarde le midi, on pratiqua deux fenêtres, l'une de solstice d'hiver, à la hauteur d'environ dix pieds de l'arie, et l'autre du solstice d'été, au-dessus de la galerie des equinoxes.*”† Here we see the chief celestial revolutions were the objects of devotion with the Celts of Gaul ; to one of which the ring before us has allusion. The statue of the goddess was placed in a central position of this sacred observatory : “*En face de la double fenêtre du milieu, ils placèrent une statue d'Isis, sous la forme d'une femme, qui avoit sur la tête un croissant, et qui tenait avec affection sur les genoux des enfans qui lui tendoient les bras.*” Here in the Celtic Isis of Falaise, we have a more pleasing form of the universal mother, the *Isani* of the Hindus, than that of the Parisii. This is the *Mata Janoni*, or mother of births ; and though I have never seen her head so ornamented with the crescent, yet that of the ONE, Creator of all, has a cross on the very apex of its pyramidal roof, at the sacred lake of Poshkur.

But supposing it might be disputed that the statues had been formed after intercourse with the Romans, we have still stronger proof in the worship of the identical symbols, such as I detected at Pæstum and Pompeii, and such as are on the ring before us, in various parts of France.

A very interesting work has been written chiefly in the Celtic monuments at Toull,‡ the *Tullum* of the Romans, and the capital of the *Luci*, a tribe renowned as archers, who appear to have worshipped Isis under the same symbols as those on the ring before us. Like the martial Rajpoot, the *Luci* had these emblems of life placed beside their sepulchres. The author specifies thirty-five monuments yet existing, “*qui ont la forme d'un cône*

* Recherches sur les Ruines et les Monumens de la ville Celtique de Toull.

† Dissertation sur Belenus, prefixed to “Recherches sur Falaise,” p. 19.

‡ I have to regret my ignorance of these remains when I passed through Toull a few months ago, and stopped some time to examine its superb Gothic cathedral.

“*tronqué, et pour socle une bordure en forme de coquille;*” but this *socle*,* or plinth to the symbol of Belenus, is described as having a small basin attached with a *rigode* or channel for the lustrations to flow off, doubtless the *yonis* of Hindu adoration. A rude statue of the goddess seated on an altar, in form an Isocles triangle, the especial sign of the followers of *Iswara*,† yields full proof of the identity of this religion.‡ I shall rest satisfied with one more quotation: “*Si l'on examine avec attention les signes, tant sous forme de disque, que sous celui de cône tronqué, ou de tronçon de colonne, on demeure bientôt convaincu qu'ils étaient, pour nos ancêtres, une symbole de religion;*” and he justly concludes, “*je suis certain que ce système religieux a pris naissance en Asie.*”‡ Contrary to the declamation of many authorities against the Celts, who are denied even capability of improvement,§ Monsieur Barailon rates their attainments highly, and quotes Diodorus Siculus to prove that “they worked skilfully in gold, silver, brass, and iron; that they formed the first of these metals into collars and rings, the second into casques and cuirasses, and with the third ornamented their sword-belts; that they had reached great perfection in the art of dyeing, and the fabrication of stuffs,” and quotes Dion Chyrtosome on the magnificence of their kings; Polybius and Florus on the beauty of their war-chariots, which were painted and gilded; and moreover states, that they coined the precious metals,|| which coins are still discovered in their old cities, and many of which exist in the “Cabinet des Médailles” at Paris.

Thus we see that this peculiar symbolic worship of Isis amongst the Celto-Etruscan colonists of Italy, and the Celtic tribe of Gaul, is perfectly analogous with the Egyptian (as recorded by Herodotus), with the Israelitic of old, and the Hindu of this present day; and the boat or *Ark*, also symbolic of this divinity, alike characterized her rites amongst the Celts and

* “55. Le socle de celles qui sont isolées, est en coquille, et l'une d'elles est entièrement cannelée.—p. 370.

“57. Ce monument a des cannelures à les extrémités, celle qui répond à l'orient a une bordure en caquille, et l'opposée un mamelon pyramidal à sa surface supérieure.”—*Recherches sur Toull.*

† I presented to the Society last year the triangular signet of Siva, with which his worshippers are impressed at his shrines and places of pilgrimage.

‡ “Recherches sur plusieurs Monumens Celtiques, p. 378. § Pinkerton, etc.

|| I obtained several silver Celtic medals at Lyons five years ago, with the Celtic characters and the effigies of a horse thereon.

the Teutonic races, as with the Egyptians and Hindus.* The Celtic *Parisii* adored the goddess under the form of a boat,† as did the *Suevi* and other tribes of the north, all tending to support the hypothesis that this worship is a memento of that grand catastrophe which befel the human race, and the subsequent preservation of the species. The finest piece of allegorical Hindu sculpture which I ever discovered had reference to this catastrophe. It represented *Narayana*, or the Spirit floating on the chaotic waters, with *Lacshmi*, *Isani*, or *Isis*, at his feet, reposing on a marine couch placed on the back of the sea-serpent, or hydra, whose many heads formed a canopy over the deity. The couch was supported by the monsters of the deep, amongst them *Nereides* blowing the *Sankha*, or conch-shell, and *Varaha* (the boar) rescuing triumphantly on his tusk these symbols of regeneration from the alluvion of universal destruction.‡

The Getic race which peopled the shores of the Baltic, was a colony of the *Thussa-Getæ*, driven from their seats between the Caspian and Euxine by Darius Hystaspes,§ six centuries before Christ. Their location is the *Parva Scythia* of Strabo, only to be looked upon as a place of halt from the original nursery, *Sakatai*, or *Sácd-dwípa*, the Greater Scythia; and Herodotus informs us that the *Thussa-Getæ*, or Western Getæ, was a branch of the *Massa-Getæ*, or Great Getic nation of Central Asia (who overcame and slew Cyrus), whose kingdom was only destroyed by the *Chagitai* (qu. *Sakatai*?) Timoor, in the thirteenth century, when the name of *Gete* was lost on their conversion from idolatry to Islamism. The seats of the *Thussa-Getæ* and other Scythic races on the

* See *Annals of Rajast'han*, vol. i. p. 570, for comparison of the *Isis* of the Nile and *Rajpootana*.

† An inscription of *Lacshmi Varma*, of the *Púár* tribe, and *Agnicula* race, king of *D'har*, dated S. 1200 (A.D. 1144), which I obtained from *Ujein*, enumerates amongst the objects in the ritual "presented to the sun" an "*Arghya*," which our inestimable and revered director, Mr. *Colebrooke*, thus renders: "an *Arghya* is an oblation, or libation in a *conch* or vessel of a particular form, approaching to that of a *boat*." Qu. *Ark*?

'*Argha*' is one term in Sanscrit for the sun.—See *Annals of Rajast'han*, vol. i. p. 601, for '*Argha-nath*.'

‡ It was at *Barolli*, near the falls of the *Chumbul*, a spot rich in allegoric sculpture and architecture of past days, but embosomed in forest and mountain, and long deserted. This was the richest of all my discoveries, and I have much to say of it in the second volume of the *Annals of Rajpootana*.

§ "*Suivant Schoning*," *Remarques sur la Mythologie du Nord* par *Jiens Wolff*.

Caspian and Euxine were, according to Plato and the most ancient writers, the abodes of the first colonists of Greece and Etruria, and hence the affinity of the Gothic, Celtic, Etruscan, and Greek languages, will cease to surprise, or that all these should reverence the universal mother, *Esa*, the goddess, *par éminence*.

The names of the tribes which peopled the north, as the Saca-senæ (*Saxons*), the Getes or Yeuts (*Yeutland*), the Su, Suiones, and Suevi (*Sweden*), and Asi, are known to Hindu history with scarcely any variation, which recognizes the *Sacas*, the *Catti*, the *Su*, *Yuti*, a branch of the Getes or Jíts, and *Aswas*, amongst its ancient martial tribes.*

The first Asiatic colonies of the north appear to have retained the name of *Gete*; those who followed them that of *Asi*. They were divided into the *white and black Asiatics* or *Asi*, the *Getes* being particularly fair, “*mais les autres sont plus foncés, plus jaunes que le goudron.*”† The abode of the first was *Asi-gard* (*region of the Asi*), of the other *Midgard*,‡ or *central region*.

The goddess *Klimba* of these northern tribes has all the characteristics as well as the name of the *Kali-amba*, or *Black Mother*, of the Hindus, and, like her, has her abode on the mountain top, where her votaries repaired to consult their destiny. She was particularly the goddess of herdsmen and agriculturists, and the same as *Ops*, *Terra Mater*, the *Hertha* of the Germans. She was also called *Laima*, *Fortune* or *Fate*; and “fragments of ancient hymns are still sung by the peasants at their popular festivals (in *Livonia*), in which the beneficent goddess is celebrated under the endearing name of *Laima Mahmina*, or *Mother Goodluck*.”§ Here we have not only the name of *Mahama*, “the Great Mother,” and *Ella-ma* or *Laima*, *Mother Earth*, but all her characteristic qualities; and even in the little titmouse, the *bird of omen of Klimba* or *Laima*, we have the parallel to the bird of omen of *Kali-ma*, the *black mother* of the Hindus.

When, therefore, besides the nominal resemblance of the tribes, we find

* See *Hist. of the Rajpoot Tribes*, vol. i. *Annals of Rajast'han*.

† *Remarques sur la Mythologie du Nord* par Jiens Wolff; and Hallet's *Northern Antiquities*.

‡ *Media-Gar*, or *Med-Gar*, would be “*central region*,” from ‘*medya*,’ *Central*, and ‘*gar*,’ a region in the language of India, whether indigenous or exotic I know not: thus *Túar-gár*, *region* or *abode of the Túars*; *Cuchwa-gar*, *abode of the Cuchwas*. So *Méwár* classically is *Med-pát*, or *central flat*, or *Med-war*, *central region*.

§ *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 460. With that beautiful romantic ballad “*Libussa*,” and the valuable notes appended to it, the lover of oriental mythology will be delighted.

many analogies in their language, theogony, and customs, developed in their mythological poetry, we may at least hint at a common origin to the Indo-Scythic martial races of India and the early colonists of Europe, and suggest that either Etruscan, Celt, or Goth, might claim the relic before us ; for whether the Ops or Isis of the fertile Campania, the Isa of the Seine and Marne, the Mahamina, Ertha or Elva, of the bleak Scandinavia, the *Isani*, *Mahama*, or *Ella* of the Indus and Ganges, or the *Ellancúa*, mother of the Turshka Chagitais, we have the same fabled divinity, the prolific Mother Earth, daughter of *Súrya*, the *Sun*, whose symbolic worship, as on the ring before us, was once universal.

The Camden of Scotland, the erudite Chalmers, in his 'Caledonia,' affirms that neither Celtic Ireland, nor Scotland had seals ; that they were strangers to gold, or coins of gold, or heraldic bearings, even to the twelfth century.* From this it would appear that the Celts of Britain had again merged into barbarism in being cut off from their Gallic brethren, who were far behind the comparatively highly civilized tribes of Italy. Rings, more especially seal-rings, seem to have been the first ornament on record, and there appears no nation, however barbarous, unacquainted with them. Scripture constantly alludes to the ring, particularly the "signet ring," the mark of initiation into official dignity in the days of Pharoah and Joseph, as in the present ; but that under discussion is a religious ring, worn as a charm against evil.

In King Haco's memorable expedition, A.D. 1267, against Scotland,† the tribes of the western isles are peculiarly designated as "*the wearers of rings.*" Thus, in verse 10 :

" *The wide-extended Bute was won from the forlorn wearer of rings by the renowned and invincible troops of the promoter of conquest ; they wielded the two-edged sword, the foes of our ruler dropt, and the raven from his field of slaughter winged his flight from the Hebrides.*"

Nor was this distinctive mark confined to the people of the isles ; for the "*Sea-king*," in his wide sweep, imposing tribute throughout the coasts of Scotland, alike applies the term to the tribe of Cat, Catai, or Catini, the *club-men* of Cathness.‡

* Caledonia, vol. i. p. 465.

† Norwegian Account of Haco's expedition against Scotland, in A.D. 1263, by the Rev. James Johnstone. Ed. 1782.

‡ Chalmer's Caledonia, vol. i. p. 67. The *Cat* derived their name from the club.—Pinkerton on the Scots.

“ *All its tribes were terrified by the steel-clad exactor of rings, and panic-struck at his mighty power.*”

We might select many other passages from “ *The Raven's Ode, which Sturla sung,*” to oppose to Chalmer's declaration, that to the end of the twelfth century the Scots were ignorant of the use of ornaments of gold; as the following: “ *Our sovereign, rich in the spoils (gold) of the sea-snake's den, viewed the retiring haven from the stern of his snorting steed,* adorned with ruddy gold.*” In this we see the analogous mythology of the Norman warrior, the Indo-Sythic Rajpoot, and the Etruscan of Italy, who alike made the serpent the guardian of treasure, as in the ring before us he is of the symbol of fruition.

Had the Norwegian king followed the bent of his inclinations, we might have speculated on this ring having appertained to one of his followers, for while at the Orkneys he held a counsel of war, purposing to extend his ravages. King Dugal, of the Hebrides, Magnus of Mann, with Byrniulf Johnson, Gudbrand his brother, the cup-bearer, and other celebrated captains, were ordered to impose tribute on the “ wearers of rings” in Mull and Kintire; another division was commanded “ *south to the Frith of Forth;*” but Haco's vassals, like Alexander's, refused obedience, and the scheme was relinquished, or we should have known whether the tribes “ *south of the Forth,*” also bore the appellation of the “ *ring bearers.*”†

But although the “ the Exactor of Rings” did not make a descent amongst the OTTADINI, one of the twenty-one aboriginal tribes of Britain, in whose haunts our relic was found: that they had sustained a signal visitation from the same shores full five centuries anterior to king Haco, we learn from the lay of their prince and bard, the celebrated Aneurin, whose poem deplores in animated strains the defeat of his countrymen by the intruding Saxons in the battle of Cattraith.‡

* *i. e.* his ship.

† ‘ *Baug-gerder,*’ *i. e.* imposer of rings. *Baug* signifies any thing circular, and it is not easy to discover when it denotes rings or shields.

‘ *Ringa elldingom,*’ *i. e.* bright rings. *Ringa* signifies not only rings or bracelets, but money; for before the introduction of coinage into the north, *very thick spiral gold wires*, were worn round the wrists of great men, who distributed bits to those who performed very great service, and such a wire is still to be seen in the Royal Museum of Copenhagen. By *ringa* is understood ornaments for the fingers, bracelets, rings of investiture, or the current money of the times.”—*Notes 34 and 44 to King Haco's Expedition.*

‡ Chalmer's *Caledonia*, vol. i. p. 59. The poem is in the British Museum.—*Turner's Anglo-Saxons.*

Whether the Celtic adorers of Belenus and Isis had attained such knowledge of the arts from their Phœnician instructors in metallurgy, or that the Getic Saxon votaries of Hertha were possessed of such ornaments, I leave as matter of speculation to others ; of one point we are certain, that this symbolic worship was alike common to the Celtic and the Gothic races, and carried by successive migrations at times of which history leaves no definite trace, from a seat which I venture to say was far east of the Caspian. To conclude—whatever the history of the Ring, it is a relic of singular curiosity, even had it originated in the plains of the Ganges, which indeed there seems little reason to doubt.
